

WASHINGTON – The U.S. House of Representatives is poised to pass legislation this evening that would provide North Chicago, Highland Park and Glenview Schools with additional Impact Aid education funds. The language included in the 2008 omnibus appropriations bill was modeled on legislation introduced by Congressman Mark Kirk on January 4, 2007 (H.R. 12). Senators Durbin and Obama backed companion legislation in the Senate.

“For more than three years the leaders of North Chicago, Highland Park, Highwood, Glenview and I have worked together to provide more funding for our school districts,” Congressman Kirk said. “At last I am pleased to announce that Congress and the President will approve these provisions, making the Impact Aid boost a reality. The quickest way to take soldiers’ minds off their duty is to have them worrying about the education of their kids back home. Together with the help of Senators Durbin and Obama, our bipartisan efforts will drastically improve resources for the schools surrounding Naval Station Great Lakes.”

Under the bipartisan language, all children of parents working at Naval Station Great Lakes and Fort Sheridan will be officially counted for Impact Aid purposes as part of the North Chicago school district. This reform will protect North Chicago’s “Heavy Impact” aid payments of over \$6,000 per student. Two years ago, North Chicago schools fell below the 30 percent military-child qualification to get Heavy Impact Aid, threatening the loss of nearly \$7 million in federal assistance. Working with Secretary of Education Spellings, Congressman Kirk invoked an unused provision of Impact Aid law to protect aid to North Chicago schools until the reforms of H.R. 12 are enacted.

Glenview and Highwood/Highland Park schools will also benefit. Since their children will be considered “Heavy Impact Aid” students under the new reform, reimbursements for education costs will rise from \$600 per child to approximately \$6,000. The increased funding under these reforms will be shared under an agreement between the three school districts. The new aid will particularly help these school districts now in the middle of an upgrade of housing in North Chicago, Fort Sheridan and Glenview. The Impact Aid changes will last through 2009 with an opportunity to reauthorize the funding boost in 2010.